Feeding your premature baby after discharge

A lot of attention has been given to the nutritional requirements of your baby since birth.

- If your baby is under 1.5kg at birth, expressed breast milk is fortified to ensure the increased nutrient requirements of a premature baby are met.

- When breast milk is not available, a nutrient enriched low birth weight formula is used. At the West Suffolk Hospital we use Cow & Gate Nutriprem 1 and SMA Gold Prem 1.

We have made regular measurements of weight and head growth to be sure your baby is eating the right amount and type of feed. Now it is time to take your baby home, we want to help you make sure that good growth continues.

Breast feeding

We continue to encourage mothers to breast feed. You will need to continue giving the iron and vitamin supplements until one year after your baby was due and these will be prescribed by your GP.

- 1ml Sytron daily
- 0.6ml Abidec daily

We hope you will be able to continue to breast feed. However, on medical advice, if you need to ‘top up’ with some formula we recommend you use Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2, a nutrient enriched post discharge formula. This is available on prescription. You will need to continue the iron and vitamins if your baby is having 50% or more breast milk.
If you decide to stop breast-feeding altogether we recommend you use Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2. You can then stop the iron and vitamin supplements as your baby will receive sufficient amounts from the formula unless specified by the Doctors/Dietitian.

If you decide to use a term infant formula instead, you should continue the iron until six months after your baby was due and the vitamins up to one year after your baby was due. A smaller amount of Abidec would be required – 0.3ml daily. If your baby is not keen to take the Abidec please discuss with your Dietitian or Dr/Consultant.

Bottle feeding

If you are bottle feeding your baby we recommend you use Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2. This will be started a few days before your baby goes home or at a weight of 1.8kg-2.0kg.

- What is a nutrient enriched post discharge formula?

It is a baby milk formula especially designed to meet the nutritional needs of premature babies when they are ready to go home.

- Why is it better than normal baby milk formula?

Research has shown that a nutrient enriched formula such as Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2 lead to a better increase in weight, length, head growth and stronger bones.

A ready to feed version will be used in hospital but you will receive powdered milk on prescription at home.

Extra Vitamins and iron are not always required with Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2.

Where do I get nutrient enriched post discharge formula?

This is available on prescription until your baby is six months old. When your baby is nearly ready to go home, you will be given a letter to give to your GP to get a prescription. You can then take the prescription to a chemist, who will order it for you.
Your GP will usually prescribe four tins of Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2 every month. You will need to get your next prescription when you open your last tin. Less than this will be required if used as a supplement to breast feeding.

**How much do I give?**

Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2 is made by adding one level scoop of powder to one fluid ounce of cooled, boiled water. (The instructions are on the container).

You should feed your baby on demand. You should make up one ounce more than your baby has been taking, so there is always more if needed.

When you first get home, make up the amount your baby was having in hospital. As your baby grows you will need to make up more milk, your health visitor will advise you.

**How long should I use nutrient enriched post discharge formula?**

Your GP will be able to prescribe it until six months after the date your baby was due (corrected age). There is no reason why you should not continue with it after this, but you will need to arrange pay for it yourself.

An alternative would be to use one of the ‘follow-on milks' designed for all babies after the age of six months. This will ensure a good intake of iron and vitamins. All major baby milk companies sell one:

- Aptamil follow on milk
- SMA follow on milk
- Cow & Gate 3 follow on milk
- HIPPI follow on milk

Please be aware that Nanny Care is not recommended.

If you use milk token to buy baby milk from the local health centre, you should change to a normal infant formula as the follow on milks will not be available.

If for any reason your baby stops taking Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2 before six months and changes to a normal infant formula, you should ask your GP to prescribe iron and vitamins.
Weaning

Once your baby is growing well on Cow & Gate Nutriprem 2 or SMA Gold Prem 2 your next question is likely to be ‘when should I start solids?’ Again there is no simple answer to this. It is likely to be somewhere between 5 – 7 months (actual age) from birth depending on how early your baby was born. The more premature, the later it is likely to be. However, it is important not to delay it too long as you may find it more difficult to get your baby to accept this new way of feeding.

Further information is available in the BLISS leaflet ‘Weaning your premature baby’, or on their website.

www.bliss.org.uk

Can I use cow’s milk?

Cow’s milk is not recommended as the major source of milk for infants under one year of age. This should started at 15 – 18 months in premature infants and it may be better to continue a follow on milk or infant formula for longer in a child who is not eating a good variety of solids. However, it is important to introduce drinks from a cup and not prolong the use of bottles.

Milk used for mixing with cereals and from a bottle or cup should be the usual formula. However, a family dessert, or sauce made using cow’s milk are suitable once weaning is established. Yoghurts and similar milk based ready-made desserts are suitable but should be made from whole (full fat) milk.

Dietitians contact telephone number. 01284 712866

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the hospital website www.wsh.nhs.uk and click on the link, or visit the disabledgo website: http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main

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